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TRANSPORTATION -- WHO NEEDS IT?
by
John A. Volpe
Secretary of Transportation

Who needs transportation? We all do!

And not just for personal mobility -- getting ourselves from place to place.

Wherever you are, stop for just a minute and really consider the things about you. Where did they start? How far have they traveled?

Editors of the TIME-LIFE Book on "Wheels" selected a drive-in restaurant just off the New Jersey Turnpike and figured how many truck miles it took to serve the usual order. The result: "A 7,141-mile hamburger." Thirty truck trips totaling 7,141 miles -- to deliver the makings for a hamburger and milk shake, plus straws, napkins, and plastic spoon.

It takes two and a half billion tons of materials every year to keep our cities going. While you sleep, a vast armada of trucks, trains, ships, aircraft, pipelines, barges is carrying grain to mills, ore to smelters, materials to factories, products to market, fuel to furnaces -- and your morning coffee in from Latin America.

Each day our Nation grows by about 6,000 people. That net increase is all in metropolitan areas. As urban corridors become longer and more densely populated, the haul from farms, forests, factories to city centers becomes more difficult and time-consuming.

The transportation network must grow in capacity and efficiency to meet the increased demands upon it.

A first responsibility of our Department of Transportation is to guide and assist that growth -- and to do it in such a way that the America of 1980 is an even better home than we have today. Both government and industry are committed to improving safety and the quality of life as we improve mobility.

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Last December a contractor constructing a four-lane highway bridge across the Tennessee River in Alabama shut down operations until this spring. Bad weather? No -- his contract provided that he would put his pile drivers and jackhammers into hibernation whenever some 65,000 ducks and geese from the Northland settled in for the winter at Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge. Wildlife experts were afraid that the noise of bridge building would drive the birds away for a couple of years and they might never return.

This decision to honor the homesteading rights of the ducks and geese was made jointly by our Federal Highway Administration, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the Alabama State Highway Department. It typifies a changed emphasis, a deep concern with preserving those things that cannot be replaced.

Because of that concern, we recently disapproved construction of a highway through the historic French Quarter in New Orleans, stopped plans for a jetport bordering the Everglades in Florida and for a highway through scenic Franconia Notch in New England.

With that concern we cannot overlook our basic need for transportation -- to move raw materials and goods; to move people where they want to be when they want to be there.

We know that transportation makes things happen. The right kind of transportation where it is most needed can go a long way toward curing many of our social ills.

What good is a job training center to a dropout who can't get to it? Or a job in the suburbs to a man afoot in the ghetto? Or a new hospital or clinic to a mother with a sick child in her arms if she can't get there quickly and economically? Night schools, libraries, even zoos and playgrounds, are only as useful as they are accessible.

That's why we have so actively encouraged passage of the Urban Mass Transportation Assistance Act -- so that my Department may help the cities of all sizes provide the kind of public transit they need -- modern rapid transit for the metropolitan areas with traffic to support it; better bus systems for others; new experimental systems to meet special challenges.

The old city bus is undergoing about as many alterations as women's hemlines. From home you may soon "Dial-A-Ride" and have a small bus or jitney at your door. Downtown, you won't have to shiver in the rain, wondering what time the 5:05 express will arrive; operating on reserved lanes, large, comfortable buses will be able to keep dependable schedules.

We're experimenting with turbine buses to reduce air pollution. There will even be buses that "kneel" at the curb to make life easier for the handicapped and others to whom that high bus step represents a giant leap they'd rather not take.

And you'll no doubt be seeing several strange new kinds of personal rapid transit (PRT) and "people movers" being tried in various areas of our cities to reduce congestion, noise, pollution, while conserving land space.

We will have half again as much highway traffic by 1980 as now, yet total air pollution by cars, trucks, and buses will be reduced.

Whether you are a driver or a pedestrian, it's your job as well as mine to see that we also reduce the tragic toll of over 150 deaths a day on our highways. Let's do it.

The new superjets, five times as big as some of those of the '60's, will be quieter and won't leave those grey air pollution trails. They will be very safe. The 747, for instance, has behind it 10 million man-hours of basic engineering and four years of intensive testing.

A tracked air cushion vehicle (TACV) with linear induction motor (LIM) promises to give us the missing link in airport ground access -- a quiet, pollution-free, high-speed vehicle to cut office-to-airport time by 10 to 20 minutes.

Supersonic transports -- perhaps trains in tubes -- super-tankers -- super-ships -- hydrofoils and craft that skim over land or water on cushions of air -- containers that move swiftly and safely from truck to train to ship or plane -- and no doubt other machines and equipment we have not yet seen -- will help move our growing population, and the materials to feed, house, clothe, educate, and entertain them.

Artery of commerce, heartbeat of industry, our transportation industry keeps America alive and on the move. This week let's say a special thank-you to the more than 10 million people who keep it running.

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